



TROOP GAMES – SMALL SPACE

These games can be played in a smaller space. They're not about putting Scout skills into action—they're mostly just about having fun.



Depending on the activity, Scouts will find some of them more challenging than others. Some are more mental, and some more physical. All of them provide the grounds to interact with members of other patrols in a Scouting activity that is light-hearted and fun.

“small” = small area for those activities that do not require as much space, or can be carried out in close quarters, or with a smaller number of Scouts

“in” = indoor activity

“out” = outdoor activity

BLINDMAN'S BUFF (*small, in or out*)

– *Materials:* neckerchief or bandana as blindfold

– *Method:* Scouts form a circle around one Scout who is blindfolded. How wide the circle is depends on the number of Scouts playing, but the circumference should be wide enough to give the Scouts room to move around comfortably with enough space between them so that no Scout is right up against another. On signal, the Scouts run around their blindfolded troop mate, until a leader calls, “Halt!” at which time the blindfolded Scout attempts to touch another Scout. Scouts can move their bodies to avoid the blindfolded Scout, but cannot move their feet. When he touches a Scout, he tries to identify him by sense of touch. If he can, that Scout becomes the next to be blindfolded.

BUZZ, BING, BANG (*small, in or out*)

– *Method:* The troop sits in a circle and begins counting off, substituting “buzz” for the number seven and any multiples of seven. If a mistake is made, start over with the next person. After circling twice, add to the mix by substituting the word “bing” for the number five and any multiples of five. If a mistake is made, start over at the point of the error. After circling twice, add to this mix by substituting “bang” for the number three and any multiples of three.

– *Variation:* When a person makes a mistake they are eliminated.

CAPTAIN ON DECK (*small, in or out*)

– *Method:* Captain on Deck is something of a combination of [O'Grady](#) and [Stand By Sixes](#). The Captain calls out orders and the group responds with actions and sounds. Like in Musical Chairs, if a person or persons can't find a chair they are eliminated. In Captain on Deck if a person or group of people either don't respond correctly or can't make a group of the correct size, they will be eliminated from this round of the game. They can join in again when a new game starts. The commands are as follows:

- “Captain on Deck!” (Scouts stand at attention facing Captain.)
- “Cannon Ball!” (Scouts bend down with their hands grasped around their knees and jump up and shout “Boom!”)
- “Man Overboard!” (Two Scouts needed. One bends down on a knee and the second places a hand over his eyes and the other hand over the eyes of the other Scout, as if looking out over the water for a lost soul at sea.)
- “Crow's Nest”! (Three Scouts stand back to back to back and join elbows behind their backs.)
- “Captain's Table!” (Four Scouts act as if they are sitting at a table eating a pirate meal with each other. Sounds of rowdy pirates talking as they eat should be heard.)
- “Walk the Plank!” (Five Scouts stand in a column behind each other.)
- *Scoring:* The winners of each round are the last one or two left playing

HAWAIIAN HANDCLAP CIRCLE (*small, in*)

– *Method:* Scouts sit in a circle. A 1-2-3 rhythm is established with all Scouts, in unison, slapping their knees on the first count, clapping their hands on the second count, and snapping their fingers on the third count. Once the rhythm is set, The first Scout says a word as he snaps his fingers. The Scout next in the circle must say a word that will logically follow the first word in forming a long, run-on sentence, and so on around the circle. The object is to say a word that will make sense in the sentence. Action is stopped if a Scout says a word too soon or too late, doesn't say any word, or says a word that doesn't make sense.

HAWAIIAN HANDCLAP LINE (*small, in*)

– *Method:* Scouts sit in a line, and count off. A 1-2-3 rhythm is established with all Scouts, in unison, slapping their knees on the first count, clapping their hands on the second count, and snapping their fingers on the third count. Once the rhythm is set, the first Scout calls a number at the instant he snaps his fingers. Maintaining the rhythm, the Scout whose number has been called waits until the instant of snapping his fingers to call another number. If Scout who calls a number too soon or too late, doesn't call any number, or calls a nonexistent number (all of which happen frequently), he loses his number, and goes to the end of the line. All Scouts then count off again. The object is to get to be number one and stay there.

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HOT OR COLD (*small, in*)

– *Method:* A troop member is selected and leaves the room or playing area. During his absence, the patrol designates an object for him to identify on his return—anything, from someone's button or

neckerchief slide to a nearby tree. When the patrol member returns, the patrol starts chanting “cold” or “hot” depending on how close he comes to the object. The closer he gets to the object, the “hotter” he is; the farther away he gets, the “colder” he is. When he is right on top of the object or touches it, the group cries “Fire!”. Then the next troop member is selected and sent out to try his luck, and so on.

HUNKER DOWN (small, in or out) [View Video](#)

– *Materials:* 20-foot length of 1/2-inch soft, synthetic rope, two platforms 6 to 8-inches tall (two halves of a cinder block or two cuts from a downed tree, 8-inches in diameter)

– *Method:* Two Scouts stand facing each other 12 to 15 feet away on the platforms. On signal, each tries to unbalance the other by either pulling or letting up the tension on the rope. Both must hold onto the rope at all times while trying to unbalance the other. Have a troop tournament, play, patrol against patrol, or Scout against Scout as a gathering period activity.

– *Scoring:* The Scout left standing the longest on his platform while still holding onto his rope wins. If a Scout lets go of the rope, he’s out, even if he’s still standing on his platform.

IDENTIFYING SOUNDS (small, in) [View Video](#)

– *Materials:* a tarp or blanket to use as a curtain, a variety of items that will produce a recognizable sound

– *Method:* The troop is seated in front of the curtain. Behind the curtain are one or two leaders who produce various sounds for those gathered in front to recognize and remember, such as turning the pages of a book, crumpling a cellophane wrapper, breaking a stick, striking a match, hammering a nail, and so on. Each Scout is furnished a pencil and paper and in turn writes down what he thinks each sound is. After all the sounds have been made, the curtain is removed and each is made again.

NAME THE MERIT BADGE (small, in)

– *Materials:* a picture of each merit badge, each picture numbered but not identified by title ([“see the Merits of Scouting” poster](#)), one sheet of paper and a pencil for each Scout

– *Method:* The numbered merit badge pictures are spread out on one or more tables. The Scouts are instructed to study the merit badge pictures for five minutes and write down the correct title of each badge beside the corresponding number on their sheets of paper.

– *Scoring:* The Scouts exchange papers and score each other’s sheets as a leader reads the correct numbers and titles of the badges. The Scout who correctly identifies the most badges wins.

– *Variation:* For a pre-opening activity, as each Scout arrives at the meeting, they are given a sheet of paper and a pencil and asked to number their paper from one to whatever the highest-numbered merit badge is. Just before the opening ceremony, all papers are collected, and the correct answers tallied. Later the winner(s) are announced and can be presented with a small prize.

O’GRADY (small, in or out)

– *Method:* Troop assembles in a single line formation, facing the leader who is four or five steps in front. The leader yells commands, but the players obey commands only if O’Grady says to. If the leader

commands "O'Grady says: Arms up!" all arms go up. But, if the leader calls "Arms up!" no arms should move. Players who obey that command are out of the game. As the game progresses and few players remain, the leader speeds up his commands and a player who makes the slightest false move must drop out of the game.

– *Scoring:* The last Scout in the game is the winner.

– *Variation:* Divide the group into two facing lines. One side obeys O'Grady, the other does not. If the leader yells, "O'Grady says: About-face!" the obeying line does an about-face and the other line stands still. When the leader calls "About-face!" the second line does an about-face, but the first does not. The object is to see which line remains in the game longer.

PRISONER'S ESCAPE (*small, in or out*) [View Video](#)

– *Materials:* a 3-foot length of cord with a small fixed loop on each end for each Scout

– *Method:* Each length of cord forms a pair of "handcuffs" by slipping a bight through the loop. Scouts form buddies, and one slips a hand through the sliding loop on each end of the cord, and the other slips one hand through one sliding loop, passes the free end behind his buddy's cord and then slips his other hand through the other sliding loop of his own cord. In this way, both Scouts are "handcuffed" together. They must escape, but cannot untie the knots or slip either hand out of a loop.

– *Solution:* The trick to escaping is for one Scout to bend the middle of his cord and pass the bend behind one of his buddy's sliding loops and over his buddy's hand.

STANDING STAVES (*small, in or out*) [View Video](#)

– *Materials:* Scout stave for each Scout

– *Method:* Scouts stand in a large circle facing inward. Each Scout holds his stave upright before him with his right hand resting on the top. When the leader calls, "One up!" all Scouts move to the right and try to catch the next stave before it falls. If the leader calls "One down!" all Scouts move to their left and try to catch the stave before it falls. If the Scout fails to catch the next stave, he drops out of the game and the gap in the circle remains. If "Two up!" or "Two down!" is called, Scouts must bypass one stave and catch the next. When two Scouts are left, a leader stands between them. They move to the left of him for "Up!" and right for "Down!".

SUBWAY (*small, in*)

– *Materials:* two rows of chairs facing each other, five feet apart, enough for two thirds of the troop.

– *Method:* The troop is divided into thirds. One third stands in the aisle between the rows of chairs (the "straphangers") and the remaining Scouts ("passengers") take a seat. When the "conductor" (senior patrol leader) calls out a stop (use names of cities in your area), everyone seated must switch sides. The straphangers take this opportunity to try to get a seat. The first Scout to get his behind on a chair wins the seat. Those without a seat become straphangers. After a couple of stops, the conductor yells "City Hall. Everyone off!" All the Scouts must exit one end of the subway, circle, reenter the opposite end, and find a seat. After a complete loop from City Hall to the terminal, the "express" is run. Start the whole process over, slowly at first, but pick up speed, spending less time at each stop.

THIMBLE FINDING (*small, in*)

- *Materials:* small object like a thimble, coin, ring, etc.
- *Method:* Scouts leave the room. One remains and places the small object where it is perfectly visible, but in a spot where it is not likely to be noticed. Then the Scouts come in and look for the object. When one of them sees it, he should go and quietly sit down without indicating to the others where it is. The others, if they see it, do the same. After a fair time any one of those sitting down is told to point out the article to those who have not yet found it. The first one to see it is the winner, and he sends, the others out again while he hides the object.

TIME BOMB (*small, in or out*) [View Video](#)

- *Method:* Organize into groups of two to 10 Scouts and have each group form a circle. The first Scout in the circle starts counting from 1 and says up to three numbers. (He could say, "1," "1, 2," or "1, 2, 3.") The next person in the circle continues the sequence by saying the next number in order. Depending upon what the first Scout said, the next person continues with the next consecutive number, saying up to three numbers counting up towards the number 12. Once again, on each Scout's turn, they can choose to say either one, two, or three numbers. Continue until someone is forced to say 12. That Scout is now out. The last Scout standing is the winner.

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